

PUTLEY CHURCH ANNUAL REPORT FOR YEAR ENDING 31ST DECEMBER 2025



**Our mission is to share our faith through
Prayer and Worship, Outreach to others and Stewardship of Church and Churchyard.**

Putley PCC (Parochial Church Council) is pleased to share with you its 2025 Annual Report. It is our way of showing accountability to parishioners for what the PCC organises and facilitates, whilst also celebrating the life and work of Putley Church in the community and beyond. We hope you enjoy reading it!

About the PCC

The PCC met five times in 2025 and has working parties with responsibility for aspects of our strategic priorities. These generally coincide with our mission statement components- Worship, Outreach and Fabric.

Members are elected by those on the electoral roll to promote, along with the incumbent, Revd Val Tait, the whole mission of the Church of England - pastoral, evangelistic, social and ecumenical. The PCC can also discuss any matter concerning the Church of England or any other matter of religious or public interest. It can make recommendations to the Deanery and Diocesan Synods and can also inform them of the PCC's opinion on matters referred to them by the Synods.

The Church of England's mission embraces the evangelism and nurturing of individuals, loving service to all, issues of justice and peace and the care of the environment and creation. This is interpreted in our Mission Statement above.

The PCC of 2025 was confirmed or elected at the Annual Parish Meeting held on 1st April 2025.

Officers: Mrs Sue Ashe - Safeguarding responsibility and Secretary; Mr Eric Porter - Treasurer; Mrs Joanna Porter and Mr John Sandfield - both Deanery Synod Representatives (ex-officio); Mrs Elaine Spalding - Churchwarden (ex officio); Revd Val Tait - Rector (ex officio). During 2025, Mr Rob Jones was co-opted with responsibility for Fabric.

The Parochial Church Council is a Body Corporate under the PCC Powers Measure 1956 and Church Representation rules 2020 and is a Charity currently exempted from registration with the Charity Commission. The PCC is mindful of the Charity Commission's guidance on public benefit and the supplementary guidance on charities for the advancement of religion.

Churchwarden's Report- Elaine Spalding

For our church here at Putley, and also for the other churches in our benefice, the highlight of our year was late June when our Rector, Val Tait, returned after six months of ill health necessitating surgery. It has been good to have her reassuring presence back among us and leading us in our worship.

Eric Porter, our Lay Reader, has continued to lead monthly "Services of the Word" including various forms of liturgy as well as taking our popular "Crib Service" on Christmas Eve. This year the church was completely filled with parents and children of all ages and there were people standing at the back. Sadly, the Christmas Day service was not as well attended.

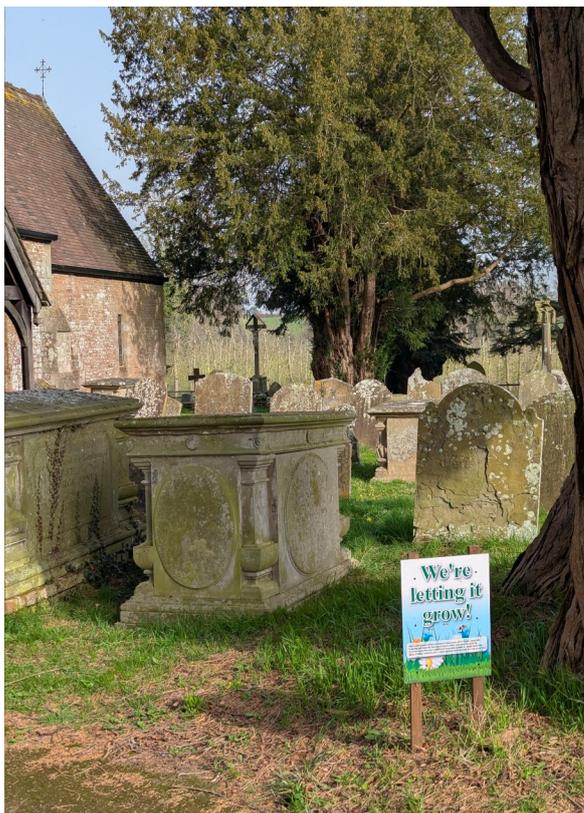
Earlier this year Eric was joined by Sue Ashe, a member of our congregation and Local Worship Leader, who now shares in taking non-Eucharistic services as well as continuing to lead, with John Sandfield, the popular bi-monthly "Sunday at Six" hour of music and contemplation.

The "Harvest Supper and Ceilidh" was bravely re-introduced after a break of several years. It was organised by Sue Ashe and Elizabeth Hunter and was a resounding success (although hard work to organise!).

With both the numbers attending services and the number of retired clergy able to officiate continuing to decrease, the PCC decided to reduce from three Sunday morning services each month to two, including one service of Holy Communion and one lay-led service. Aylton has services on the first and third Sundays and Putley on the second and fourth with a rotating Benefice Service on fifth Sundays, when they occur. This means that there is a service most Sundays in either Putley or Aylton for parishioners wishing to attend. We are so very grateful to the retired clergy who come to bring us services of Holy Communion in our own parishes so that we can enjoy the "togetherness" it brings.

In April, Ken Treherne, (husband of Pam), a much loved and respected member of our congregation, and willing doer of almost any task over many decades, died. We shall all miss his good humour and twinkling smile and the churchyard will miss his loving attention. Another loyal parishioner, Gerald Maddox, also died in 2025, two months off his one hundredth birthday. His family arranged the funeral for his birthday week in January. Gerald has laid the wreath at the Remembrance Day service up to the last couple of years when his health prevented his attendance.

It is with regret that I note that the PCC has made little progress with the work specified as necessary in the Quinquennial Inspection of 2023, except for seeking funding through grants. This is a necessary preliminary to work commencing as the church cannot afford to fund the work without grant support. It is sincerely to be hoped that significant progress can be made in the coming twelve months.



Climate change continues to have an impact and its effect has been noticeable. A very wet spring was followed by a very hot and dry summer when, for the first time in several decades, the pond by the church completely dried up. Extremes of weather, especially damaging autumn storms, are becoming a regular feature of our climate here on the Marcle Ridge. We must do our best to ensure that our beautiful little church and churchyard survive the climatic changes that are currently taking place and can continue to stand as a witness to Christ and the Christian faith in this hidden corner of Herefordshire. To explain our policy and what we do to encourage wildlife and sustain our Churchyard, we have new signs to show we leave areas of grass to grow for invertebrates and insect habitats. Many churches, including Cathedrals, have similar signs as we each seek to care for our Churchyards as 'God's Acres.'

Prayer and Worship - Worship group members are: Sue Ashe, Eric Porter (Chair) Jo Porter, John Sandfield, Elaine Spalding, Rev Val Tait.

The aim of our Worship provision is to provide services and other worship times throughout the year so that both traditional and contemporary styles are catered for and all worshippers find a style through which they can worship. We also consider service publicity and how the church building and Parish Hall are used for worship.

Our service pattern changed in 2025 to one communion and one other a month. Generally the latter is 'Come and See' which is a contemporary style service allowing for a variety of focus and style. 'Sunday at 6' was renamed 'Music and Meditation' to explain the content. It remains a contemplative service of music and poetry held on Sunday evenings of alternate months.

We welcomed Amanda Wright to provide the hymn accompaniment at Communion services. Amanda is organist at Wellington Heath and Little Marcle. Thank you, Amanda, for also playing at our Carol service.

Worship highlights of the year were: Celtic service from the Northumbrian Community, Christingle service for Save the Children Charity, Mothering Sunday, where the congregation was invited to plant wild flowers in the churchyard, the Churchyard service to remember friends and relations at rest there, and the Remembrance Service on 11th November. This year the wreath was laid by Norman Stanier and a smaller wreath laid to remember Joe Solomon Taylor, who died in 1917 and has a Commonwealth Grave in the Churchyard. The wreath was brought back last year from Ypres where his name is listed for service to his country.

The Monday Midday Prayer Group continued to meet throughout 2025, either in the Church, Churchyard or in a member's home.

Thanks to Eric and Jo Porter for their continuing commitment in organising these and for those who faithfully attend each week.

During Christmas 2025 over 70 people attended Church services and, on Easter day, 34. Our regular worshipping community is 16.

There were three funerals or interments of ashes.

Outreach to others

The main event of the year was the Harvest Supper which took place in October attended by nearly seventy members of the community and enjoyed by all. Whiffledy band provided the music and were asked to play a few less strenuous pieces from time to time to give the older dancers time to recover! Thanks to Sue Ashe and Elizabeth Hunter who planned and executed the event and special thanks to Nic Beaumont and Jayne Cresswell (seen in photo) who staffed the bar. Thanks too for generous donations of food, drink or financial support from Westons Cider, the Hunters, Louise Daly, and to Pam Treherne and Sue Tyrrell for serving the food and to Margaret Wilson for endlessly washing up! Funds raised were shared between Ledbury Foodbank and the Church for its urgent repairs.



Fabric-Church and Churchyard - The Fabric Group members: Rob Jones (Chair), Eric Porter, Hannah Smith and Elaine Spalding.

The overall aim of the PCC is to provide a well-maintained visible presence of God in our community and a physical resource in the Church's mission. Key in this are our church and churchyard, which are home to centuries of history including many artefacts. They bear witness to the commitment of those who have ensured that the buildings remain standing. It has been called 'a jewel in the orchards' and is treasured by the PCC as such. The Churchyard is also a treasury of natural life of the ferns, flowers, trees and creatures that live in it. The agreed Churchyard policy is applied so that grass cutting is linked to lifecycle needs, so that species thrive and are protected within our own special natural sanctuary.

Fabric Report - Rob Jones

In 2025 the PCC progressed the delivery of the works required to meet the Quinquennial inspection recommendations.

The works have been formally tendered by our architects, KODA Hereford, and the lowest tender received was from I J Preece & Sons at just over £75,000 to which would need to be added an allowance for building cost inflation as well as Professional Fees. The main focus of the works is to control water ingress from defective guttering and lead gulleys, as well as replacement of roof tiles and infill of cracks around windows. No formal instruction to proceed can be given until the funds are in place

Although the PCC is prepared to help financially support the cost of the works, their reserves will not pay for all the work. The grant application process has therefore commenced, and we have already secured support from Hereford Historic Churches Trust and Laslett's Charitable Trust. As part of the Fund Raising process the Church will hold a lecture in May as part of the Herefordshire Histories Festival in 2026 and we are also looking to host a summer concert and perhaps another Harvest Supper in Autumn. We hope all events will be supported by the local community.

The Friends of Putley Church continue to provide funding and support to help maintain the fabric of the church and churchyard as a significant landmark of the community, rather than its Christian ministry, as their approach is secular. Their support provides a link with non-religious members of our community and also a global reach through their website www.friendsofputleychurch.org. We remain grateful for their continued support.

In the meantime, a group of volunteers regularly maintains the Churchyard to ensure that it is a special final resting place for so many, but also a place to remember loved ones or to just sit and enjoy the setting which is rich in biodiversity and wildlife.

All compliance certificates as well as PAT testing are up-to-date and the Health and Safety Policy reviewed.

Publicity

Details relating to the Church can be found at 'A Church Near You' (<https://www.achurchnearyou.com/church/10695>).

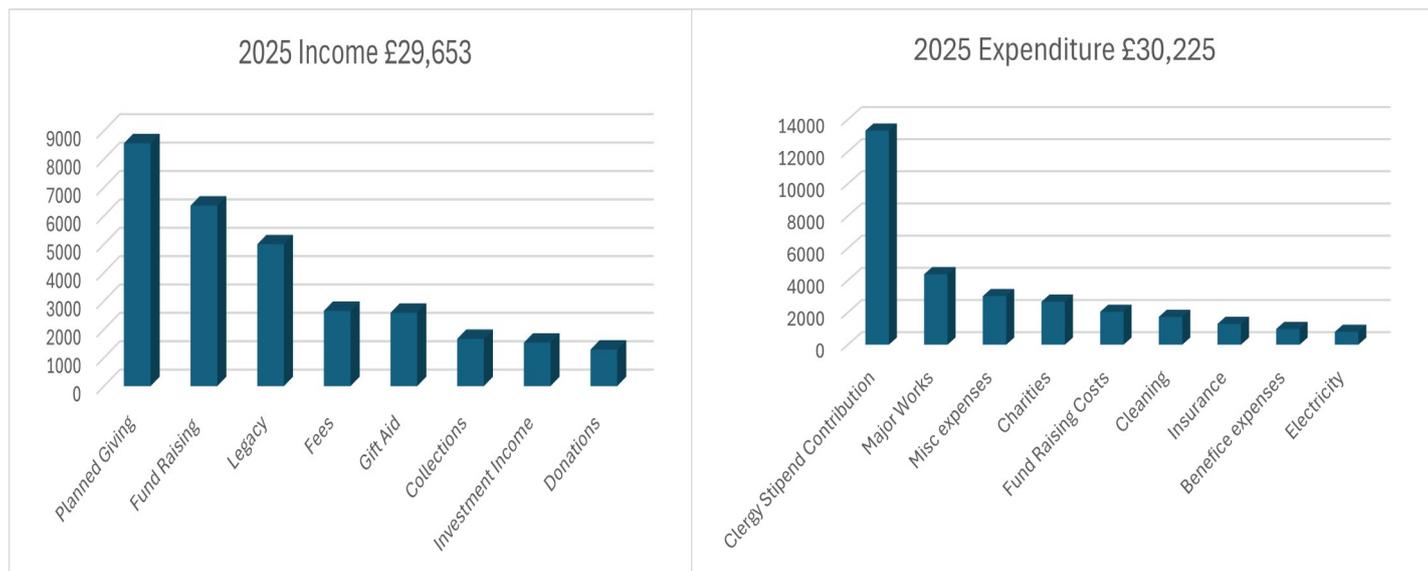
Reminders of special services are posted on Putley Village Facebook page and Cider Press Whatsapp group.

Service times are publicised on the back cover of each Cider Press and on noticeboards at the Church, Pool End and the Parish Hall.

The Cider Press also includes a short report of news from the Church and a longer piece from Rev Val for her Benefice churches.

Elaine Spalding, as churchwarden, sends weekly emails, to those registered, with details of services in the coming week. Eric Porter sends information on special services and events to those who have requested them. If you would like to be on these lists, please let us know.

Treasurer's Report 2025-Eric Porter. Please read with audited accounts-Appendix 1.



A loss of approximately £7,200 was anticipated, but the actual loss for the year was £572.

Receipts were over budget to the value of £11,655, the main increases being in Fundraising £3,468, Fees £2,506 and in the receipt of a £5,000 legacy.

Special mention and thanks are due to all who were involved in running the Open Gardens event which, after the deduction of expenses, raised £1875, split equally between the Church and the Parish Hall. Given that the weather on the day was dreadful, this was a very good outcome.

The popular Harvest Supper, after the deduction of expenses, raised £1201.60 split equally between the Church and Ledbury Foodbank.

On the debit side there was an overspend of £5,043 due mainly to Quinquennial Tender costs of £4,380 and the donation of an extra £1,062 to charities.

£5,000 was transferred from one of our investment funds to cover the cost of the Quinquennial Tender. The investment funds were depleted by a further £2,281 due to market conditions.

The PCC donated £2,672 to charities in 2025. The charities supported were ARocha, Herefordshire Historic Churches Trust, Christian Aid, Herefordshire Mind, St Michael's Hospice, Ledbury Foodbank and Herefordshire Churches Tourism Group. Produce and monies donated to the Church at the Harvest Festival were also taken to the Foodbank.

In 2025, the 100Club contributed £900 to the Quinquennial Tender.

Donations to the church made using CollecTIn amounted to just over £630.67

At the end of September, we changed our Electricity supplier to SmartestEnergy. The changeover did not go smoothly and no invoice was generated in 2025. This explains why the Electricity cost shown in the accounts is well under budget.

Deanery Synod Report - John Sandfield

The General Synod is the national assembly of the Church of England originating in 1970, to replace an earlier body known as the Church Assembly. The General Synod considers and approves legislation affecting the whole of the Church of England, formulates new forms of worship, debates matters of national and international importance, and approves the annual budget for the work of the Church at national level.

A Diocesan Synod is the primary elected governing body of a diocese in the [Church of England](#), functioning as a "parliament" or key strategic decision-making forum. Comprising clergy, laity, and bishops, it meets roughly three times a year to advise the Bishop, set policy, manage finances, and debate religious or public issues.

Hereford Diocese, which includes part of Shropshire, also has 12 Deanery Synods, with representatives drawn from its 409 churches grouped in 356 Parishes. They are appointed by the Parochial Church Councils in those parishes and also attend three meetings each year. Members of these bodies also sit on the Diocesan Synod.

Putley is part of the Ledbury Deanery Synod. Their meetings were attended by John Sandfield and are held in the evening or on Saturday mornings at different churches within the Deanery. In 2025, the meetings took place at Colwall, Withington and Ledbury. The format of meetings usually consists of hearing from external speakers about relevant matters of national or local interest, often drawn down from the other Synods. A general update on Church of England affairs is always part of the meeting in order that each attendee can update her/his fellow PCC members.

The meeting in 2025, at Colwall, was concerned with Diocese finances and was contentious, as it is at every level of the Diocese. Input was given by the Diocesan Secretary, Mr Sam Pratley. In September, at St Michael's Church, Ledbury, Bishop Richard spoke of what Jesus might have said about refugees seeking asylum which, as one might imagine, was extremely thought-provoking. He referred to Fundamental Christian principles of 'All created in the image of God'(Genesis) and the 'Ministry of reconciliation' (2 Corinthians Chapter 5).

Safeguarding Report - Sue Ashe The safeguarding team is Sue Ashe (named responsibility) with Revd Val Tait.

The overall aim of the PCC is to 'Promote a Safer Church' as described by our Policy, displayed on the church noticeboard, inside Church and on the 'Churchnearyou' website.

In 2025, the Diocese changed its Safeguarding provider to 31:8 which is a Christian Organisation working nationally for Safeguarding. It takes its name from Proverbs 31 verse 8

Speak out on behalf of the voiceless, and for the rights of all who are vulnerable.

The Diocese encouraged churches (especially small ones) to join together and set up Safeguarding hubs, perhaps across a Benefice, to support each Church's safeguarding lead and ensure consistency in approach and practice. This has indeed happened and we now are part of the Cider Church Benefice Hub. The Benefice Hub members (PSOs) are: Julia Oughton (lead) - Much Marcle, Little Marcle and Yatton, Sue Barnes - Wellington Heath and Pixley, Sue Ashe - Putley and Aylton. We meet together to discuss practice, process and their challenges, but we do not share any concern or disclosure. These are directly reported to the Safeguarding Team or Police.

The role of each Parish Safeguarding Officer (PSO) remains to support and advise the Parishes on Safeguarding, specifically DBS and Training, and then support organising it with them. A PSO undertakes significant training including Recruitment for new members of PCC.

The PCC always welcomes any offer of help, even occasional, in any way. If you would like to offer or find out more, please contact us.

The PCC wishes to thank the Rector, Revd Val Tait, and the Churchwarden, Mrs Elaine Spalding, for their dedication and commitment to our parish.

The number on the Electoral Roll for 2025 was 41.

Administrative information. Putley Church is situated in the Parish of Putley, the Deanery of Ledbury and the Diocese of Hereford within the Church of England. The correspondence address is-
The Secretary, Putley PCC, Putley Court, Putley, Ledbury HR8 2QP, Sue.ashe@hotmail.com

To give feedback on the report or for enquiries arising from it, please contact Sue (07759546487).